

Jersey County Arts Council to Host Free Summer Block Party in Jerseyville

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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JERSEYVILLE - The Jersey County Arts Council encourages community members to set the date for their upcoming Art Block Party.

Sherry Droste, director of the arts council, said the nonprofit is excited to host the event on June 1, 2024, complete with art vendors, food trucks, a balloon artist and plenty more. The arts council often sponsors community art programs and initiatives, but this

will mark their first community-wide event, and they can't wait to "put the art in block party."

"A group of people got their heads together and said, 'We're a small town. We're rural. Let's figure out how we can provide a diverse range of opportunities for people to have creative outlets, cultural experiences, etc.' And we kind of ran with that," Droste remembered. "It's been successful beyond my expectation, which is a nice problem to have."

The arts council will stay busy in the summer, whether it's handing out art-to-go sacks at the farmers market or providing enrichment activities for the school district's Reading in the Park program. But they still wanted to host a bigger event for everyone in Jersey County to enjoy.

The event will take place in the City Center Plaza in Jerseyville, with tentative plans for a color run around Lions Club Park. Droste said more information will be released soon, but they are eager to welcome [Bubble Bus](#), [Glitter Faces](#), and portable pottery from the [Macoupin County Arts Collective Art Bus](#), among other vendors and food trucks.

"We're just winging it," Droste joked. "We're just always on the lookout for what we can do that provides cool experiences for the community. We want it to be casual and fun, like a kickoff to summer."

The event itself is completely free, which is an important part of the arts council's mission. The organization has received a few grants, and these will fund most of the day's activities. Droste said the arts council has "literally hundreds of really great ideas," but their main goal is to make art affordable and accessible for people, especially the kids they serve. As a retired teacher, Droste knows firsthand how important this is.

"We especially don't want to keep kids from having these kinds of experiences and opportunities because they don't have \$5 or \$10 to spare. So that's really our mission," she said. "I think we have a connection to the community, and this is just another way to do that. It's kind of a way for us to give back to the community, if you will, for supporting us so profoundly so far."

The arts council has completed several projects and free programs in the past, and they continue to sponsor local art initiatives. They also have a scholarship fund so they can provide free classes to those who need them.

In the meantime, they're gearing up for the Art Block Party, and they couldn't be more

excited. If you would like to be an art vendor, contact the Jersey County Arts Council at (618) 639-5232 to receive an application. Droste said they are asking for a \$25 donation from vendors and there are 25 vendor spots available.

For more information about the organization's programs, you can visit their [official Facebook page](#). They will provide updates about the Art Block Party as they get closer to the June 1 event date.

“We just have fun with it, really. That's really our bottom line, just how can we do this and have fun and provide good experiences for people?” Droste added. “It's a nice feeling to live in a nice place where people are appreciative. They're very much appreciative of what's going on.”